

The Power of Giving: From Intuition to Reality*

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Back Drop

The M.P. Birla Institute of Management graduates around 160 students in Management and Indian industry has a lot of trust and recognition of the type of talent built at the institute. Around 63 reputed companies have recruited from this institute. No wonder it has had 95% in placement amongst people who opted for placement and the highest salary of outgoing class is continuously increasing and now stands at Rs.8/- lakhs/annum. The Students, Faculty and administration are to be complimented for their efforts to get the institute ranked 21st amongst the Top 100 Business Schools in India and achieving a high impact thru your Mission and Values.

As you leave the corridors of this Institute, it is clear to me that many of you have high ambitions and lots of hope and dreams. Some of you are looking forward to getting your first pay cheque, many dream about owing your first vehicle and of course the enjoyable week ends with entertainment and eating out. Enjoying the fruits of your success is certainly an essential part at this stage of your life. Partly you are driven by the two markers by which the external society judges you- Money and Position and soon the conversation amongst friends is how good the offer a classmate of yours has

got and the title and perks associated with the role the person has landed.

As a close observer of groups like you for the last 40 years - believe me the conversation has not changed- the change is in the quantum. When I entered the workforce thirty seven years back with an MBA the demand for MBA was high with a limited pool of MBA's. Still on an inflated adjusted basis your entry levels compensations are at least four times higher. It is important that you recognize that you have a great platform and the opportunity to be in the right place to create an impact, which will go beyond you and that, is what I would talk to you today.

As you exit out of this Institute there is a danger of falling into this trap of judging success based on a two-legged stool - Money and Position. What Physics has taught us very early in life is that two legged stools always have a stability problem and hence the disillusion sets in soon that you have nothing more to achieve. Hence, there is a need to adopt to a more stable option of a three legged stool and maintain stability. Your career will not be judged over a short period. It is what you do and how you create impact over a long period, which is important. Your career and success metrics should not

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be like a T20 but more like a Test match. I will share with you what I see as a “Stewardship” role, which each of you have to practice to adopt a more stable outlook on your career and life.

Mother Theresa said: ***“At the end of life we will not be judged by how many diplomas we have received, how much money we have made, how many great things we have done. We will be judged by ‘I was hungry and you gave me to eat, I was naked and you clothed me, I was homeless and you took me in.’ Hungry not only for bread — but hungry for love. Naked not only for clothing — but naked for human dignity and respect. Homeless not only for want of a room of bricks — but homeless because of rejection”.***

Many times experiences prompt you to take a different course. The power of Right Role Models need to be recognized. The powerful impact, which role models have made with successful business people, sportspersons and people creating an impact in every occupation is being seen.

The Role Model

Let me share with you the true story of Justice Raymond Zondo who rose to become the Deputy Chief Justice of South Africa. Justice Zondo was born in a poor family of nine children, which did not have the support of his father. His mother worked hard to get them food and basic shelter. Because of his perseverance and support of some good Samaritans Justice Zondo completed his schooling, and was keen to pursue Law. His mother by then had exhausted all her savings and the choice before him was to take up work to support his family or pursue his dream. He did not lose hope and went to town to meet an Indian businessperson called Moosa to request him to extend a loan. Without questioning him, Mr. Moosa told him that he will help him but will not give him money. He said that he will give him a Voucher of certain value and every month his mother can come to his store and pick up the provisions she wanted. He will maintain an account of what she has taken and he can pay him back later. For three years this arrangement went off well, Justice Zondo completed his Law Degree, and got his first job. He went back to Mr. Moosa to ask him what he had to repay. Mr.

Moosa told him that he owes him nothing and his only request was that he must do for others what he had done to him. There are very powerful messages in this anecdote- First the perseverance to dream and achieve what you dream. How you can you help a stranger without asking questions when there is a genuine need and more than that how do you motivate him to amplify the message of Voluntary help to others. Can we in our lifetime follow the great examples of Mr. Moosa and Justice Raymond Zondo and amplify the Joy the Giving. This is the power of Daana-an Indian Concept-practiced since generations through denominational institutions.

At your stage in life, many times you will be conflicted with the desire to give, but constrained by your mental barrier of feeling that you do not have the resources to give. It is important that you get over the ‘fear’ of inadequate resources and start in whatever manner you feel fit. In order to help you navigate that phase, a set of tips are shared, which was covered in an article by Jenny Santi, and was published in Time magazine in March 2017.

Find Your Passion

Your passion should be the foundation for your giving. It is not *how much* you give, but *how much* love you put into giving. It’s only natural that you will care about this and not so much about that, and that’s OK. It should not be simply a matter of choosing the right thing, but also a matter of choosing what is right for you.

Give Your Time

The gift of time is often more valuable to the receiver and more satisfying for the giver than the gift of money. We don’t all have the same amount of money, but we all do have time on our hands, and can give some of this time to help others—whether that means we devote our lifetimes to service, or just give a few hours each day or a few days a year.

Give to Organizations with Transparent Aims & Results

According to Harvard scientist Michael Norton, “Giving to a cause that specifies what they’re going to do with your money leads to more happiness than giving to an umbrella cause where you’re not so sure where your money is going.”

Find Ways to Integrate Your Interests & Skills with the Needs of Others

"Selfless giving, in the absence of self-preservation instincts, easily becomes overwhelming," says Adam Grant, author of *Give & Take*. It is important to be "otherish," which he defines as being willing to give more than you receive, but still keeping your own interests in sight.

Be Proactive, Not Reactive

We have all felt the dread that comes from being cajoled into giving, such as when friends ask us to donate to their fundraisers. In these cases, we are more likely to give to avoid humiliation rather than out of generosity and concern. This type of giving doesn't lead to a warm glow feeling; more likely it will lead to resentment. Instead we should set aside time, think about our options, and find the best charity for our values.

Don't be Guilt-tripped into Giving

I don't want to discourage people from giving to good causes just because that doesn't always cheer us up. If we gave only to get something back each time we gave, what a dreadful, opportunistic world this would be! Yet if we are feeling guilt-tripped into giving, chances are we will not be very committed over time to the cause.

The key is to find the approach that fits us. When we do, then the more we give, the more we stand to gain purpose, meaning and happiness—all of the things that we look for in life but are so hard to find.

Let me share with you my own example - When I graduated from Business school I was driven by the same

criteria which is possibly in the minds of many of you- I was wanting the job which pays the best and the role had to be something exciting. These were the two legs, which I was chasing, and once you get into the chase there is no looking back. However, at a certain point and time you reach a stage where you start wondering what next. In a way, the founding of Mindtree addressed some of these questions and one of the founding ethos of Mindtree is that we will be an organization admired for its focus on social consciousness and until date, we have not deviated on this. Not only as an organization we are very conscious of the impact we create on the society but we help Mindtree minds find their passion in contributing back to Society and this is a very basic fabric of the organization which binds us together. We encourage Mindtree Minds thru Individual Social responsibility goals to contribute back to Society in areas where they are passionate about.

There is a Chinese saying that goes: "If you want happiness for an hour, take a nap. If you want happiness for a day, go fishing. If you want happiness for a year, inherit a fortune. If you want happiness for a lifetime, help somebody." For centuries, the greatest thinkers have suggested the same thing: Happiness is found in helping others.

Make what change you are able to make now, and let the 'giving spirit' spread like a virus, infinitely touching the lives of people you may never meet, across boundaries you may never cross, in ways you may never imagine. That is the power of giving and your ticket to changing the world.